(c) whether the Government's procurement rate of the small forest products is very less in Bihar compared to rates in Madhya Pradesh; and

(d) if so, the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to make the rates uniform in both the States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. RANGARAJAN KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) According to National Forest Policy, Minor Forest Produce provides sustenance to tribal population and to other communities residing in and around the forests. Such produce should be protected, improved and their production enhanced with due regard to generation of employment and income.

(b) The States where Minor Produce have been nationalised are Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra & Orissa and the Minor Forest Produce items nationalized are, Tendu-leaf, Sal seed, Mahua seed, Kusum & Karanj seeds, Harrna and Aonla fruits.

(c) The procurement rates of some Minor Forest Produce items like Tendu leaf are higher in M.P. whereas that of items like Sal seeds are higher in Bihar.

(d) The procurement rates of Minor Forest Produce items are fixed by the State Governments only and Central Government have no jurisdiction over it.

New Plants in Steel and Cement Sectors

5401. SHRI RABI RAY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some proposals have been sent to his Ministry about setting up of new plants in the steel and cement sectors;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the decision taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Thirty four applications have since been received in the steel sector for sponge iron plants – 9 in Andhra Pradesh, 1 in Uttar Pradesh, 11 in Madhya Pradesh, 2 in West Bengal, 2 in Bihar, 1 in Karnataka, 2 in Orissa, 5 in Maharashtra and 1 in Tamil Nadu.

Thirty one applications have since been received for cement plants – 3 in Andhra Pradesh, 3 in Himachal Pradesh, 1 in Uttar Pradesh, 13 in Madhya Pradesh, 3 in Gujarat, 5 in Rajasthan, 2 in Karnataka and 1 in Maharashtra.

(c) Will depend on merit with regard to rail transport angle.

Vohra Committee

5402. SHRI BHUWAN CHANDRA KHANDURI:
SHRI RAM NAIK:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have constituted Vohra Committee for examining the issues relating to hotel facilities and other related matters like pollution in the coastal areas;

(b) if so, the terms of reference of the Committee and when it is likely to submit its report; and